

Interior/CALFED Integrated Environmental Water Acquisition Program

Management Group Update: 2/15/00

Under the authority of Section 3406(b)(3) of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA), the Department of the Interior (Interior) has established the CVPIA Water Acquisition Program (WAP) to assist in meeting the objectives of the Anadromous Fish Restoration Program (AFRP) through the acquisition of water to supplement CVP yield dedicated for fish and wildlife purposes under Section 3406(b)(2) of the CVPIA. As mandated under Section 3406(d)(2), the WAP is also charged with acquiring incremental Level 4 refuge supplies to allow for full-habitat development at specified refuges. Interior attempts, through the acquisition of water from willing sellers, to meet those flow objectives recommended by the AFRP that are not met through modifications of CVP operations or by management of the water under Section (b)(2), to the extent that water supplies can be made available and acquired. Interior desires to begin acquiring water on a long-term basis to the extent possible, to provide certainty in water supplies and to reduce the costs involved in these acquisitions.

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program was created to develop a long-term comprehensive plan that will restore ecological health and improve water management for the beneficial uses of the Bay-Delta system. As part of CALFED's Ecosystem Restoration Program, CALFED has recommended funding to acquire water for environmental restoration. To the extent possible, CALFED desires acquisitions to be long-term.

In response to requests received from several stakeholders, and in recognition of the efficiencies that could be achieved, Interior and CALFED propose to integrate and coordinate the planning for their environmental water acquisitions. Such integration and coordination would result in the development of a single long-term plan for environmental water acquisitions. As a result, Interior and CALFED would avoid competing with each other for environmental water, the acquisition of environmental water could be facilitated to optimize biological benefits, through multiple, synergistic uses of acquired water; and stakeholders would be provided a single, more streamlined approach that prioritizes all environmental water acquisition needs, while at the same time meeting the requirements of the separate programs.

In the short-term, CALFED cannot acquire water prior to having a signed Record of Decision on the CALFED Bay-Delta Program Programmatic EIS/EIR. Further, substantial planning and coordination efforts are required before water needs can be identified for each stream. However, Interior and CALFED propose to issue a joint Solicitation of Interest with the Spring CALFED Proposal Solicitation Package (PSP) as a first step to introduce the concept of an integrated environmental water acquisition program and to help identify sellers potentially interested in participating in the Program as it develops.

The language for the water acquisition solicitation of interest for the PSP is being drafted and will be available for review at the February 22 Management Group Meeting.

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